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Building Newsletter 7-1

Penetrations of Fire-Resistive Wall and Ceiling Membranes

Interpretations of State and Local Building Codes
1994 Uniform Building Code: Chapter 7
Revision Date: January 1996

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I. Penetrations of Fire-Resistive Ceilings

Section 710.2 of the Uniform Building Code states that fire-resistive ceilings shall be without openings with the following exceptions:

- A. Openings for noncombustible sprinkler pipe and openings for steel electrical outlet boxes not greater than 16 square inches in area are permitted provided the combined opening area is not more than 100 square inches for any 100 square feet of ceiling area.
- B. Duct openings protected with approved ceiling fire dampers, or combination smoke- fire dampers as required in Section 713.10.
- C. Duct openings may be unprotected when tests (per UBC Standard No. 7-1) show that opening protection is not required. This exception does not apply to corridors that are required to have fire-resistive ceilings.

D. Other ceiling openings and penetrations may be installed if openings, penetrations and the assemblies in which they are installed have been tested per UBC Standard No. 7-1.

E. Openings enclosed in rated shaft enclosures.

F. Access doors are permitted when they are approved horizontal access door assemblies.

II. Protection at Recessed Fixtures

Recessed lighting fixtures and other penetrations which penetrate or otherwise interfere with the integrity of the continuous fire-resistive ceiling membrane must be enclosed with an approved backing material having a fire-resistive rating at least equivalent to that required for the ceiling membrane.